ADVISORY AND OVERSIGHT GROUP | February 24, 2025

Welcome!

Victoria-Saanich Citizens' Assembly on Municipal Amalgamation

VICTORIA SAANICH CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY

victoriasaanich.ca

AGENDA

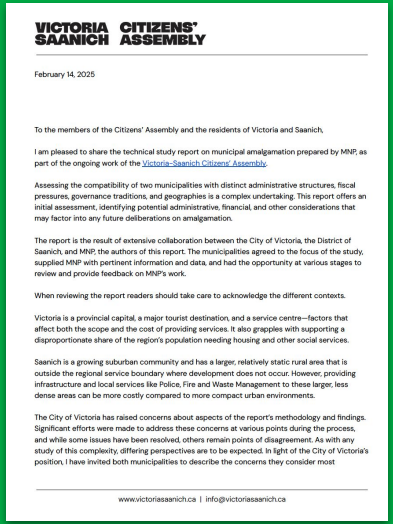
1. Welcome & Recap
Technical Study
Sessions 5 and 6 + Interim Report

2. Upcoming Activities & Programming
Public Meetings
Sessions 7 and 8 + closing ceremony
Indigenous involvement
Preparing for the recommendations

3. Next Steps

Next Advisory Group meeting:
Monday, Apr 14, 2025, 6-7pm PT

Technical Study Report



VICTORIA CITIZENS' SAANICH ASSEMBLY

February 14, 2025

To the members of the Citizens' Assembly and the residents of Victoria and Saanich,

I am pleased to share the technical study report on municipal amalgamation prepared by MNP, as part of the ongoing work of the Victoria-Saanich Citizens' Assembly.

Assessing the compatibility of two municipalities with distinct administrative structures, fiscal pressures, governance traditions, and geographies is a complex undertaking. This report offers an initial assessment, identifying potential administrative, financial, and other considerations that may factor into any future deliberations on amalgamation.

The report is the result of extensive collaboration between the City of Victoria, the District of Saanich, and MNP, the authors of this report. The municipalities agreed to the focus of the study, supplied MNP with pertinent information and data, and had the opportunity at various stages to review and provide feedback on MNP's work.

When reviewing the report readers should take care to acknowledge the different contexts.

Victoria is a provincial capital, a major tourist destination, and a service centre—factors that affect both the scope and the cost of providing services. It also grapples with supporting a disproportionate share of the region's population needing housing and other social services.

Saanich is a growing suburban community and has a larger, relatively static rural area that is outside the regional service boundary where development does not occur. However, providing infrastructure and local services like Police, Fire and Waste Management to these larger, less dense areas can be more costly compared to more compact urban environments.

The City of Victoria has raised concerns about aspects of the report's methodology and findings. Significant efforts were made to address these concerns at various points during the process, and while some issues have been resolved, others remain points of disagreement. As with any study of this complexity, differing perspectives are to be expected. In light of the City of Victoria's position, I have invited both municipalities to describe the concerns they consider most

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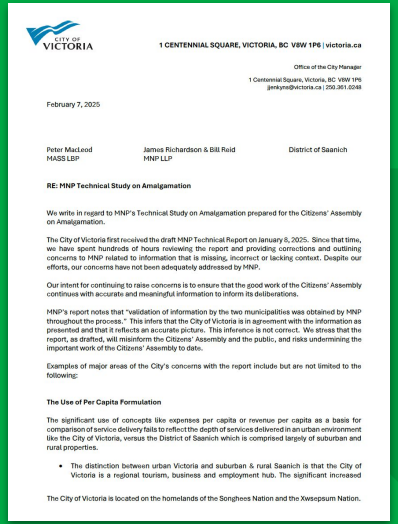

CITY OF VICTORIA

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February 7, 2025

Peter MacLeod
MASS LBP

James Richardson & Bill Reid
MNP LLP

District of Saanich

RE: MNP Technical Study on Amalgamation

We write in regard to MNP's Technical Study on Amalgamation prepared for the Citizens' Assembly on Amalgamation.

The City of Victoria first received the draft MNP Technical Report on January 8, 2025. Since that time, we have spent hundreds of hours reviewing the report and providing corrections and outlining concerns to MNP related to information that is missing, incorrect or lacking context. Despite our efforts, our concerns have not been adequately addressed by MNP.

Our intent for continuing to raise concerns is to ensure that the good work of the Citizens' Assembly continues with accurate and meaningful information to inform its deliberations.

MNP's report notes that "validation of information by the two municipalities was obtained by MNP throughout the process." This infers that the City of Victoria is in agreement with the information as presented and that it reflects an accurate picture. This inference is not correct. We stress that the report, as drafted, will misinform the Citizens' Assembly and the public, and risks undermining the important work of the Citizens' Assembly to date.

Examples of major areas of the City's concerns with the report include but are not limited to the following:

The Use of Per Capita Formulation

The significant use of concepts like expenses per capita or revenue per capita as a basis for comparison of service delivery fails to reflect the depth of services delivered in an urban environment like the City of Victoria, versus the District of Saanich which is comprised largely of suburban and rural properties.

- The distinction between urban Victoria and suburban & rural Saanich is that the City of Victoria is a regional tourism, business and employment hub. The significant increased

The City of Victoria is located on the homelands of the Songhees Nation and the Xwsepsum Nation.

VICTORIA CITIZENS' SAANICH ASSEMBLY

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MNP Technical Report outline

Background and Purpose
Local Government in BC Overview
Goals/Aims & Documented Issues
Study Method and Report

Geography
Boundary Map
Population

Financial Overview
Property Taxation
Revenues and Expenditures
Capital Assets and Projects
Debts
Other Considerations (if present)

Municipal Administration and Services
General Government
Planning and Development Services
Protective and Emergency Services
Environmental Health
Parks and Recreation Services
Social Support Services
Other Considerations (if present)

Financial Impacts
Potential Annual Impacts to an Amalgamated Municipality
Potential One-Time Implementation Expenses
Overview of Adjusted General Municipal Tax Rates
Potential Property Tax Impacts on Representative Properties
Other Considerations (if present)

Regional District Impacts (CRD)
Representation
Services Differences (if any)
Other Considerations (if present)

Key considerations noted during study
Naming
Community
Governance
Transition Process
Community Vision, Planning, and Development
Social and Environmental Issues
Disadvantages and Advantages
Other Considerations (if present)

Review of Session 6 (Feb 8)

Presentation: Technical Study Report (MNP) + member review

Community Perspectives Panel:

- Dallas Gislason, South Island Prosperity Partnership
- Jonathon Dyck, Victoria Foundation
- Andrew Duffy, Times Colonist
- Leo Spalteholz, Homes for Living
- Joanne Peake, Prospect Lake District Community Association

Presentation: Supporting Two Municipalities (Allison Habkirk)

Public Meetings

Tuesday, February 25

Online – via Zoom

6 – 8 p.m. (Zoom opens 5:50)

- Presentation of Technical Report
- Q&A
- Breakout Group Discussions

Thursday, February 27

In Person – Crystal Garden

6 – 8 p.m. (doors open 5:30)

- Presentation of Technical Report
- Q&A
- Roundtable Discussions

Preview of Session 7 (March 8)

Final Presentations by Victoria & Saanich

Review of public meetings, public submissions, ALC

Member deliberations: reaching consensus

Drafting the final report

Preview of Session 8 (April 5)

Finalizing the draft report

Video

Closing ceremony

- Dignitaries & special guests
- Media
- Certificates of public service
- Reflections

Indigenous involvement

Victoria Native Friendship Centre (declined)

Invitation re Welcome to Territory for closing ceremony

Invitations to 7 FN chiefs/reps to attend

Other?

Preparing for the recommendations + final report

Reaching consensus (minority reports)

Values, issues + questions, priorities, recommendation(s)

Aligning with Assembly ToR

Public information / education

Next Advisory Group meeting:

Monday, April 14, 2025, 6–7pm PT

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Thank you!

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